

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name National Bank of Commerce Building

other names/site number Commerce Trust Company Building

2. Location

street & number 922-924 Walnut Street [n/a] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [n/a] vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64105

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my
opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered
significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date 5 April 1999

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [] entered in the National Register
See continuation sheet [].
[] determined eligible for the
National Register
See continuation sheet [].
[] determined not eligible for the
National Register.
[] removed from the
National Register
[] other, explain
See continuation sheet [].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing.

n/a

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National
Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

Commerce/Trade/financial institution
Commerce/Trade/office building

Current Functions

Commerce/Trade/financial institution
Commerce/Trade/office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American
Movements/skyscraper

Materials

foundation concrete
walls granite
brick
roof asphalt
other terra cotta

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

Commerce

Architecture

Periods of Significance

1908-1949

Significant Dates

1908

Significant Person(s)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Hunt, Jarvis/Fuller, George A., Company

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: Western Historical Manuscripts
Collection: Kansas City Public Library; Commerce Trust

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
15 363220 4329330

C. Zone Easting Northing

B. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cydney E. Millstein

organization Architectural and Historical Research date December 1998

street & number P.O. Box 22551 telephone 816/363-0567

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64113-0551

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Commerce Bancshares, Inc.

street & number 1000 Walnut Street telephone 816/374-0666

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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National Bank of Commerce Building
Jackson County, MO

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SUMMARY

The National Bank of Commerce Building, located at 922-924 Walnut Street, Kansas City, Missouri, is a sixteen-story granite, Brazilian brick and terra-cotta commercial building measuring nine bays by seven bays. Designed by Chicago architect Jarvis Hunt in 1906-07 and constructed in 1907-08 by George A. Fuller Company, Kansas City, the Beaux-Arts influenced banking facility is located in the heart of the central business district. Its three-part vertical block scheme imparts a granite base and contrasting stone shaft and capital. Directly to the east of the building is the historic Kansas City Title and Trust Company Building (1922); to the south is the Commerce Bank Building (1984-86). A vacant lot lies to the north of the building, while a commercial storefront topped by a parking garage built in 1940 is situated to the west. A skywalk, linking the National Bank of Commerce to the parking facility and to Commerce Bank, was constructed adjacent to the west facade in 1980. Its placement does not impact the essential historic characteristics of the bank building. In good condition, the National Bank of Commerce has retained the majority of its historic features to convey its historic significance.

ELABORATION

Exterior

The main facade faces east. The symmetrically-placed entrances are situated behind three prominent arches, crowned by a denticulated balustrade and supported by elaborately carved molded ancons with volutes and garlands. Smaller similarly designed brackets, positioned at the top center of each arch, visually resemble keystones. The entrance arcade features domed ribbed vaults with wide spandrels. Aluminum-framed entrances with fanlights are modified from the original units. First and second-story fenestration exhibit tripartite, steel-framed casement units (operable, second story and inoperable first story); multipaned transoms are displayed at the first-story.

An additional entrance at the east facade features a metal marquee with art glass panes which spell out the word "COMMERCE" at the east, north and south faces. The arched marquee, supported by large metal chains, is embellished with a prominent cartouche and festoons in high relief. The recessed entrance features two aluminum-framed doors set in an elaborately carved surround set beneath a molded panel. A large cartouche flanked by carved engaged puttae rests below a multipaned mezzanine window. The entrance bay is framed in a decorative entablature surround topped by a narrow table with a blind oeil-de-boeuf.

First and second-story fenestration of the east facade is duplicated at

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the south facade, which is sloped. The 10th Street entrance bay, set in a two-story recessed arch crowned by a prominent ancon, is protected by a metal marquee with multiple antefixes and cartouche. The marquee is supported by metal chains and large, carved brackets. Non-original metal-framed doors rest below a segmental-arched multipaned transom. A large cartouche in high relief is displayed in the blind arch above. The words "COMMERCE TRUST COMPANY" are carved in a frieze below a narrow denticulated cornice.

The third-story fenestration of both the east and south facades is recessed one-over-one, double-hung, sash wood frame with granite sills, paired except at the end bays. Basement fenestration at the 10th Street facade is non-original, tripartite metal-framed. A water table separates the basement fenestration from that of the first-story.

The fenestration of the "shaft" portion (4th through 13th floors), and the 14th and 15th floors of the "capital" section of the east, south and west facades is recessed one-over-one, double-hung, sash, wood frame with brick sills. At the west facade, sills are continuous. Units are paired, except at the end bays, which also feature brick quoining. Terra-cotta spandrels separate the windows at the east and south facades.

An ornate stringcourse with multiple lion heads lies between the 13th and 14th stories of the east and south facades and the end bays of the west facade, thereby separating the "shaft" portion from the "capital." The attic level tripartite fenestration of the center bays of the east and south facades terminate in highly embellished arches which are separated by carved ancons. Wide, spandrels adorned with carvings in high relief are placed above the segmental arched fenestration of the 15th story. The end bays of the west facade are similarly treated, without the use of the arch. The remaining attic level fenestration at the main, south and west facades is a combination of one-over-one, single-hung, sash; tripartite and casement.

The north facade, composed of common brick, is completely void of ornamentation, with the exception of a molded stringcourse at the upper level. A molded cornice with prominent modillions and wide overhang is featured at the main and south facades and the end bays of the west facade. A paneled parapet lines the perimeter of the building.

A granite and tempered glass arched skywalk, linking the third story of the National Bank of Commerce to the parking facility (west) and Commerce Bank (south), was constructed in 1980 in the alley adjacent to the west facade. Its design does not impact the essential historic features of the bank building.

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The Clock

At the southeast corner of the National Bank and Trust Company building is a 3300 pound cast-bronze and copper clock, designed by the Livers Bronze Company, Kansas City, in collaboration with IBM. The clock, which cost nearly \$16,000, was installed on August 21, 1953. Boese-Hilburn Electric Company, Kansas City, was the prime contractor.

Standing 11' from ground level, the clock body is 5' x 8" square and features four luminous dials 48" in diameter. The clock can be read at a distance of at least two blocks. An outer face of 1/4" glass protects the hands. Detailing includes ancons, cresting and pendants. It is supported on heavy steel plates welded directly to the corner structural steel column of the building.

As originally designed, timing is controlled automatically by an IBM electronic master clock installed inside the building. Automatic correction is accomplished, following an electrical power interruption, by a patented, self-regulating feature of the master clock. Westminster Chimes, which strike on the quarter hour, were originally transmitted electronically to both the Tenth Street and Walnut Street entrances where they were amplified from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm.

Marquees

The decorative marquees located the Walnut and Tenth Street, as described above, were not part of the original construction campaign. To date it is not known if they were planned by Hunt as part of the original scheme of the bank facility. Although it is not certain when they were added to the exterior, they do appear in a ca. 1917 photograph.

Interior

Through the years, the interior of the National Bank of Commerce building has been modified several times. The Walnut Street Lobby, originally featuring a prominent marble staircase, open mezzanine, walnut woodwork and crystal chandelier, no longer retains Hunt's design vocabulary. After alterations in 1923 (which added an open mezzanine across the east side of the lobby), 1940 (when the west mezzanine was enclosed, the interior clock and vault entrance were eliminated) and several more after 1959, all that is left of both the Walnut Street and 10th Street lobbies is the original size of the space. The escalator, installed in 1955, was the first in Kansas City. While

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upper floor corridors generally are intact, offices have been modernized.

There are, however, several areas of the bank building which have retained their historic integrity. James Kemper's office, and a portion of the Board Room, both located on the second floor, feature molded wood paneling and ornate plaster ceilings. At the first floor, the president's room, with marble fireplace and original woodwork, and the elevator lobby, which displays marble walls and terrazzo floor, all remain in good condition. The original vault, installed in 1908, remains at the data base center located at the Tenth Street facade.

Future Plans

Currently there are proposed plans for the renovation and adaptive re-use of the National Bank of Commerce Building. Future plans for the bank include renovation of the exterior, main and elevator lobbies and modernization of the upper floor office space. These plans are being prepared by Gastinger Walker Harden, Kansas City, Missouri, in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for The Treatment of Historic Properties*. Once the proposed plans are completed, they will be submitted to the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office for review.

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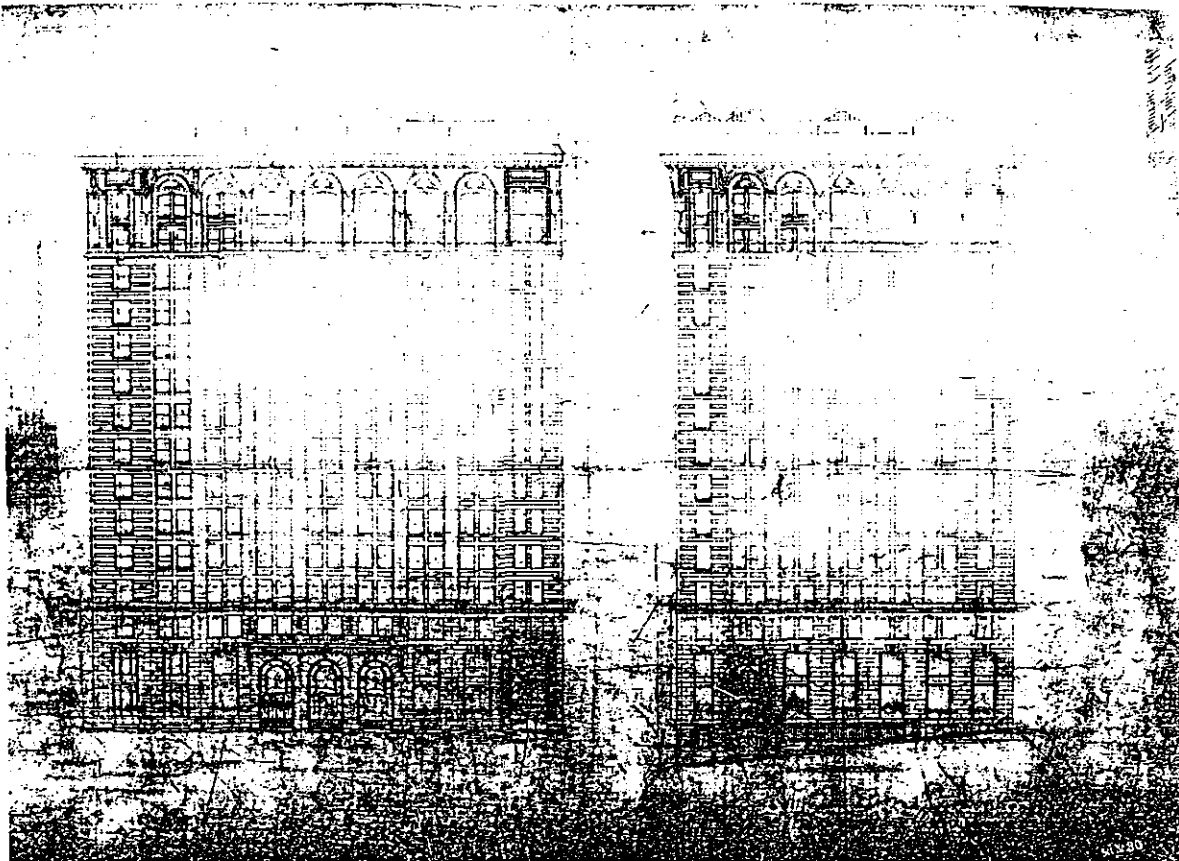
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National Bank of Commerce Building. East and South Elevations.
Jarvis Hunt, September 1906.



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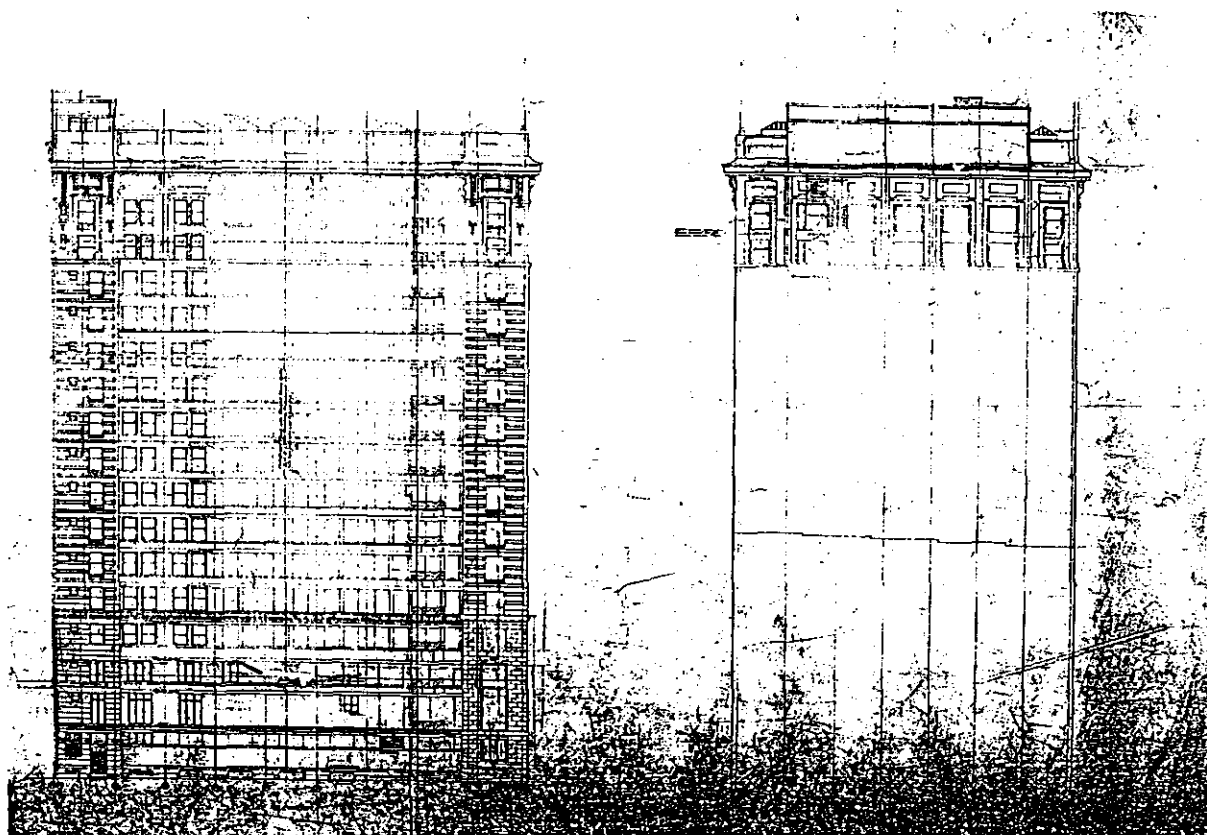
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National Bank of Commerce Building. West and North Elevations,
Jarvis Hunt, September 1906.



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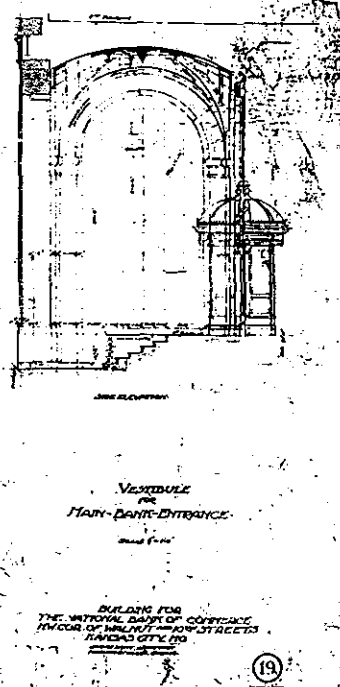
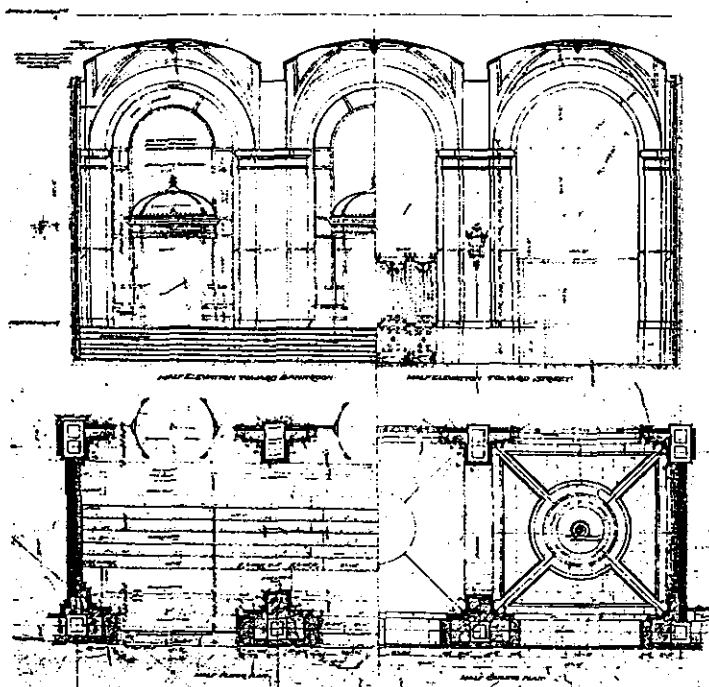
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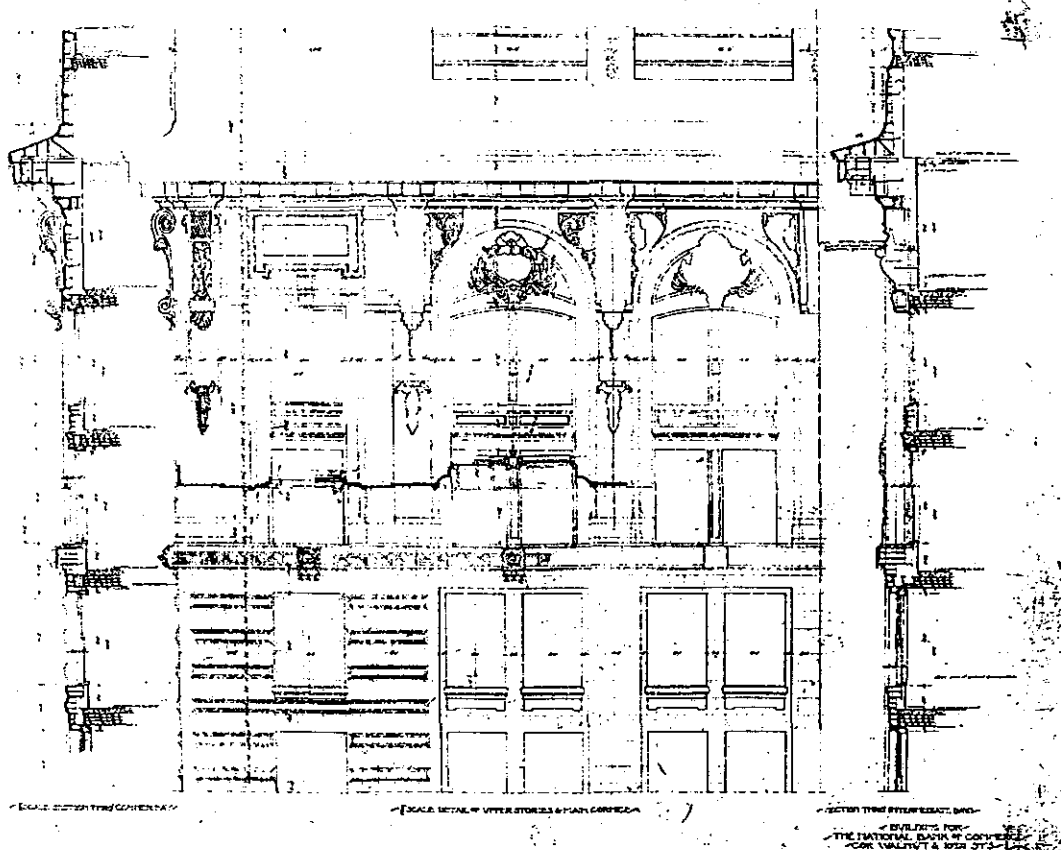
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National Bank of Commerce Building. Walnut Entrance Vestibule.
Jarvis Hunt, September 1906.



National Bank of Commerce Building
Jackson County, MO

National Bank of Commerce Building. Detail of Upper Stories and Main Cornice. Jarvis Hunt, September 1906.



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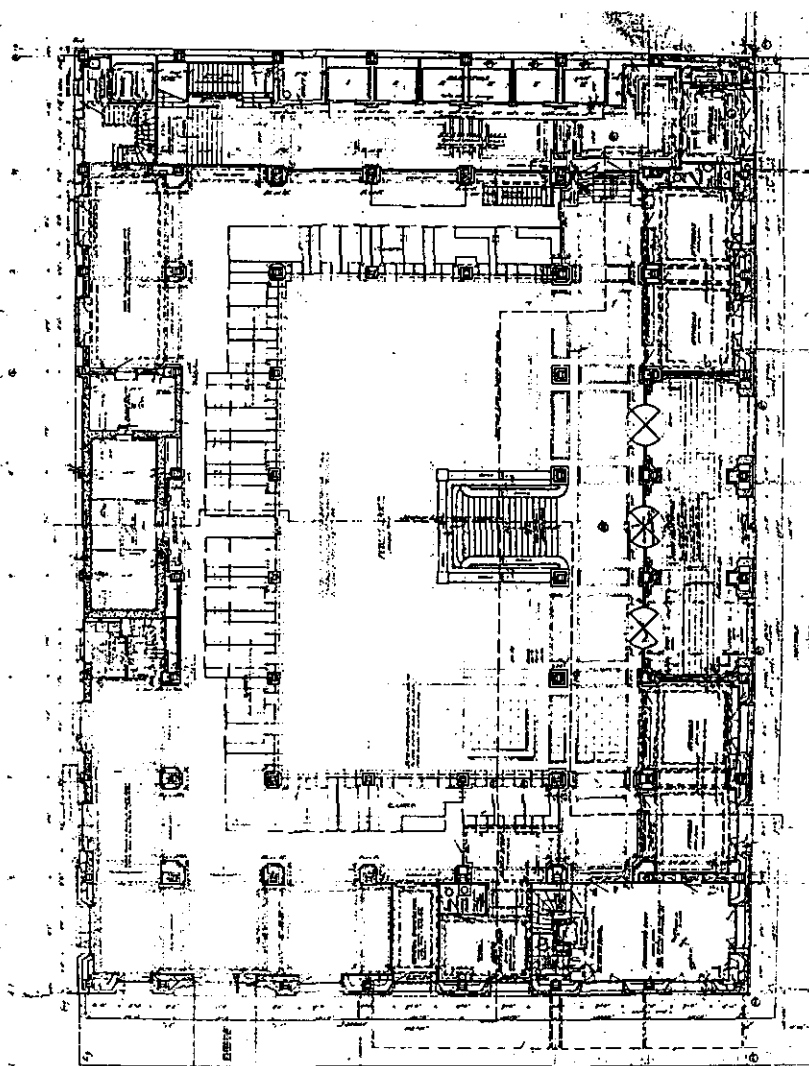
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National Bank of Commerce Building. First Story Plan. Jarvis Hunt,
September 1906.



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THE NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE BUILDING
JACKSON COUNTY, MO
SEPTEMBER 1906

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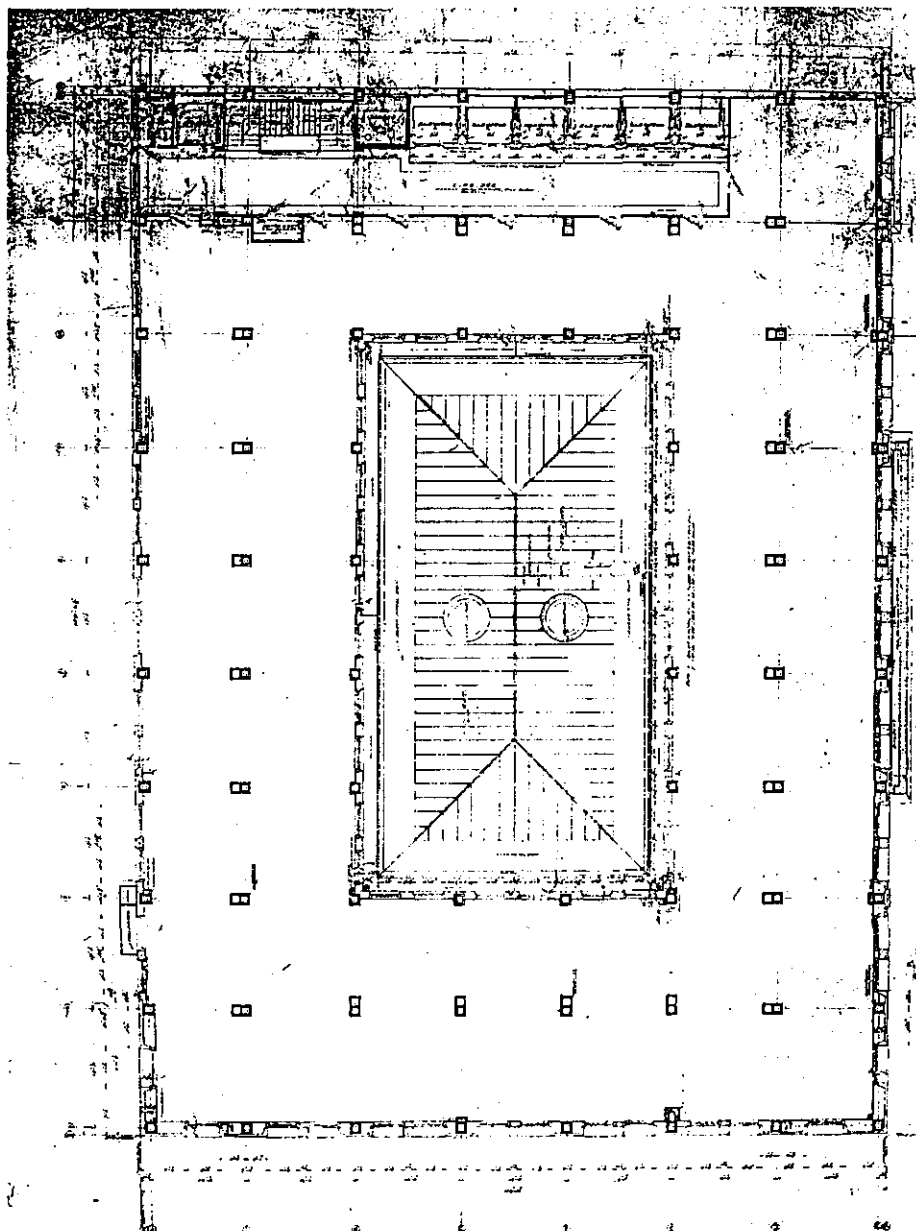
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National Bank of Commerce Building. Second Story Plan. Jarvis
Hunt, September 1906.



SECOND STORY PLAN

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

NOTES:
1. ALL WORK TO BE DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS
AND THE NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION.
2. ALL WORK TO BE DONE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS
AND THE NATIONAL ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION.

BUILDING FOR
THE NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE
INCORPORATED IN KANSAS CITY, MO.
KANSAS CITY, MO.
JANUARY 1907.

(6)

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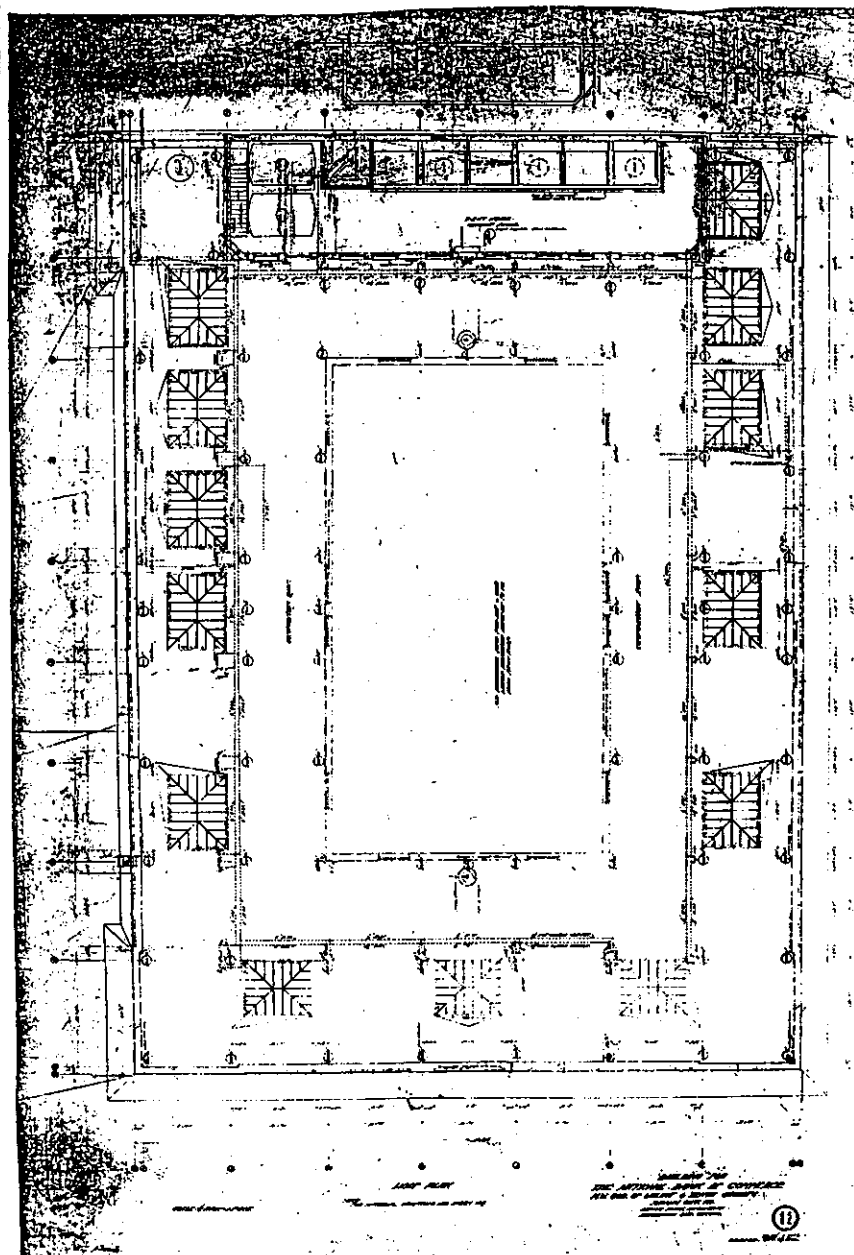
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National Bank of Commerce Building. Roof Plan. Jarvis Hunt,
September 1906.



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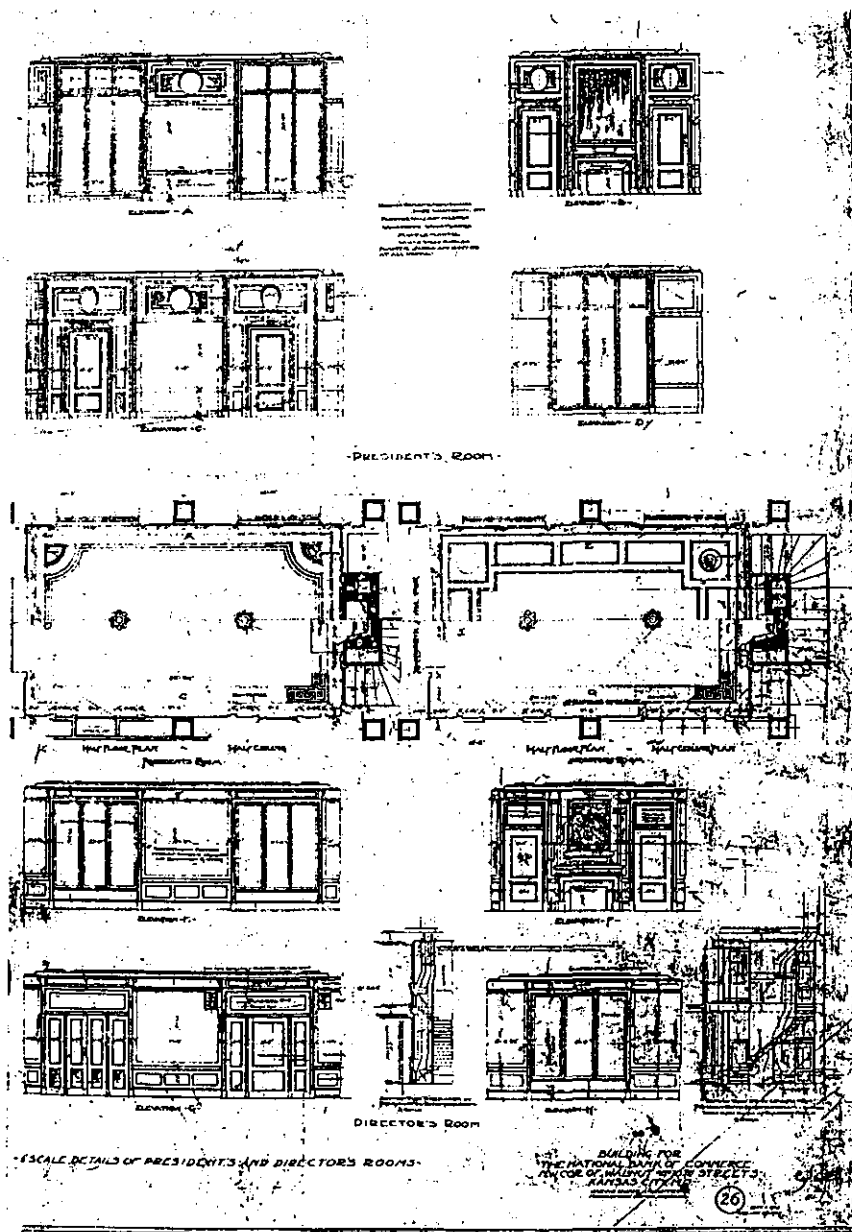
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National Bank of Commerce Building. Detail of President's and
Director's Rooms. Jarvis Hunt, September 1906.



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National Bank of Commerce Building. Source: *The Inland Architect*
and *News Record*, July 1908.



NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE BUILDING, KANSAS CITY, MO.
Jarvis Hunt, Architect, Chicago

THE INLAND ARCHITECT
AND NEWS RECORD
JULY, 1908

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Commerce Trust Company Building, formerly the National Bank of
Commerce Building, ca. 1917. Source: Special Collections, Missouri
Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library.



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National Bank of Commerce Building, Walnut Street Lobby, 1908.
Source: Commerce Trust Company Archives.



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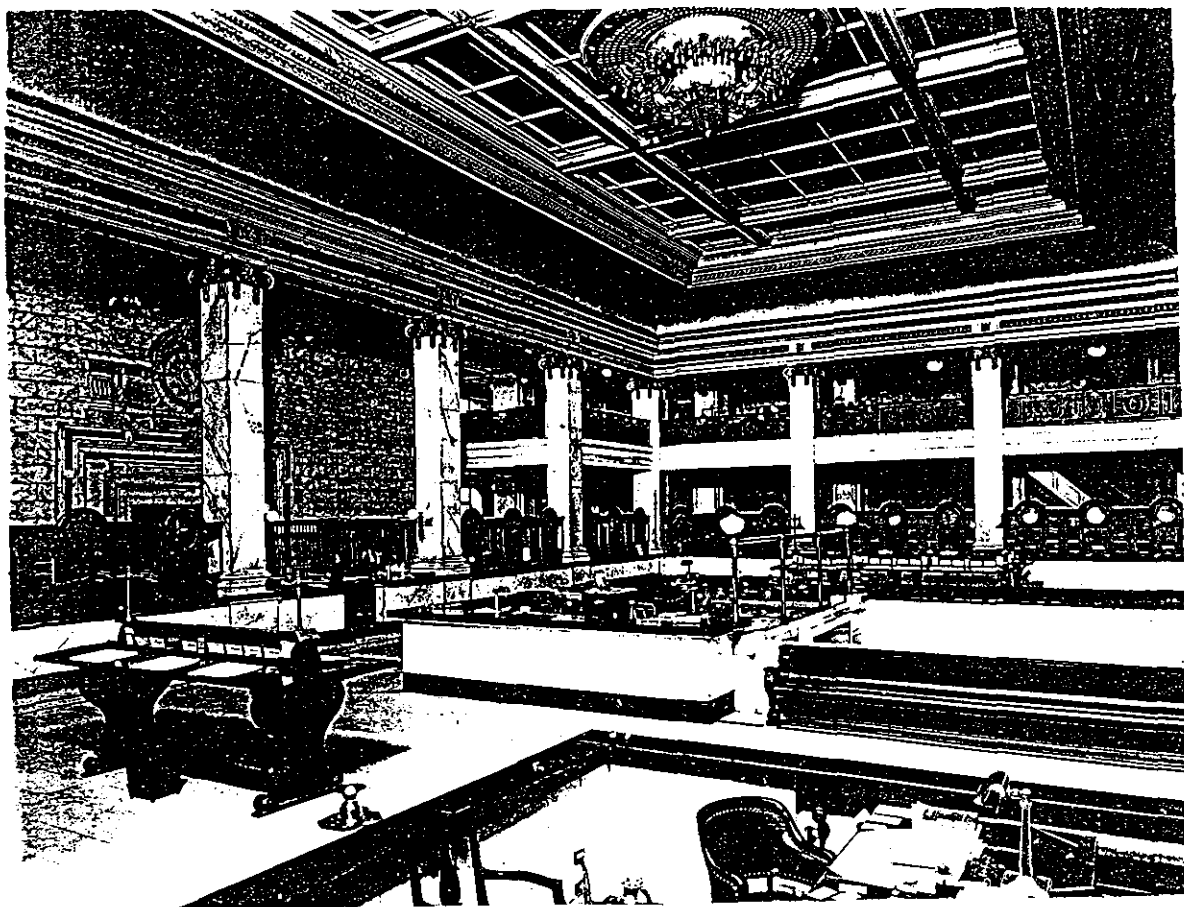
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National Bank of Commerce Building, Walnut Street Lobby, 1908.
Source: Commerce Trust Company Archives.



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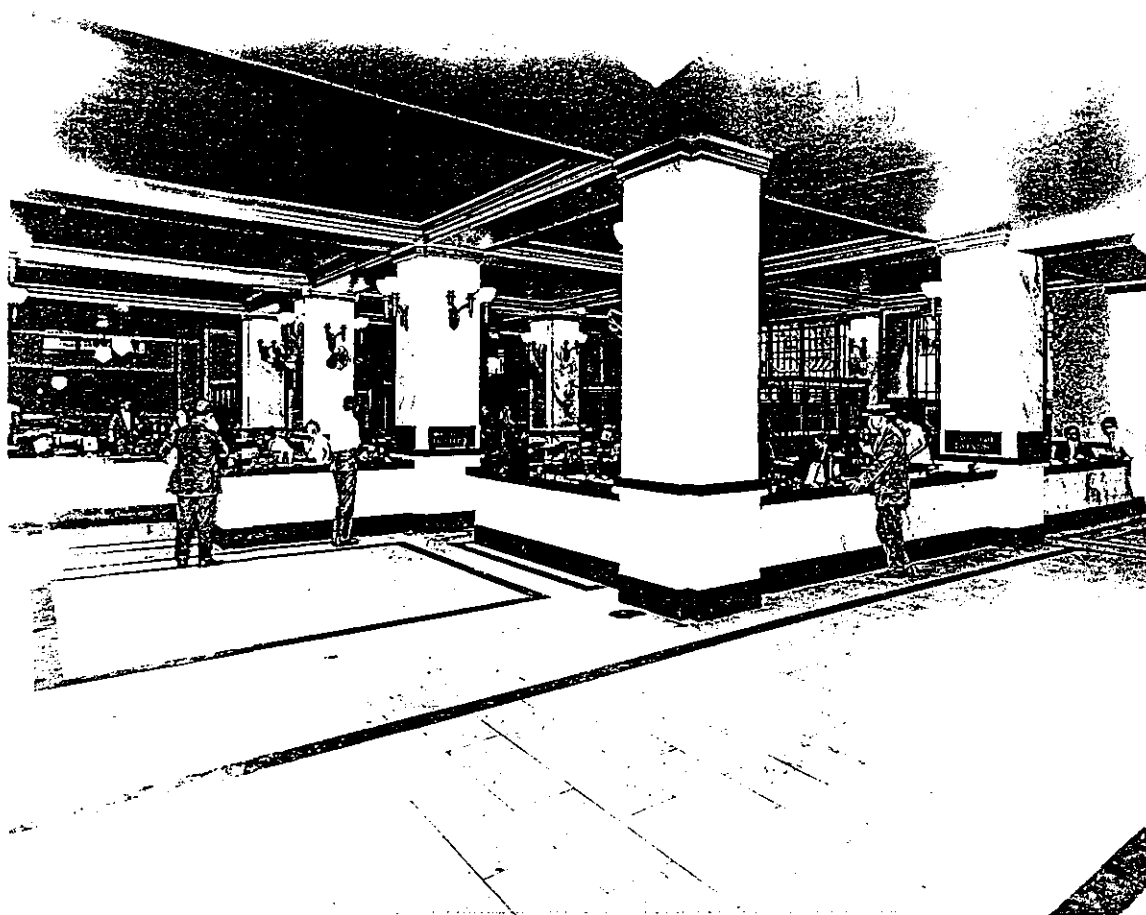
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National Bank of Commerce Building, Tenth Street Lobby, c. 1920s.
Source: Commerce Trust Company Archives.



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National Bank of Commerce Building
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SUMMARY

The National Bank of Commerce building, located at 922-924 Walnut Street, Kansas City, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C and is significant in the following areas: COMMERCE: Established in 1865 by Francis R. Long and subsequently led by William T. Kemper and his legacy, the National Bank of Commerce evolved into Missouri's number one ranking financial institution and "the greatest banking dynasty in the history of Missouri." (Hubbard and Davids, 150). ARCHITECTURE: Designed in 1906-1907 by prominent architect Jarvis Hunt and completed in 1908, the National Bank of Commerce building represents, in Kansas City, one of the best examples of early skyscraper design, as espoused by the celebrated Chicago architects Louis Sullivan, William LeBaron Jenney and Daniel H. Burnham. The period of significance is 1908-1949, the end date established by the arbitrary fifty-year limit.

ELABORATION

The National Bank of Commerce, Kansas City, Missouri

At the close of the Civil War in April 1865, a group of Kansas City capitalists led by Francis R. Long, organized the Kansas City Savings Association with a capital of \$20,000. The new bank, originally located at Second and Main streets, evolved into one of Missouri's most prominent financial institutions. Long, whose nephew R.A. Long was able to institute his lumber company with the support of his uncle's bank, was named president. In addition to his involvement with Kansas City Savings Association, Long was elected as mayor of Kansas City in 1869, and became a strong proponent of railroad commerce, a city gas works system, and an increase in public schools.

In 1873, James B. Bell (father of V.B. Bell, one of the founders of the Long-Bell Lumber Company), purchased a substantial interest in the Kansas City Saving Association and subsequently became president. Five years later, the bank's capital had grown to \$50,000 and its deposits to \$250,000. Due to this increase in activity, Bell decided it was necessary for the bank to move to new quarters at Fourth and Delaware, a location the bank curiously shared with the Magnolia Saloon.

Kansas City Savings Association underwent significant changes over the course of the next decade. In 1881, Dr. W.S. Woods, who was raised in Columbia, Missouri, and graduated with a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania, purchased a controlling interest and became president. In 1882 Woods rechartered the savings association as the National Bank of Commerce, with a capital of \$200,000. To celebrate it's twentieth anniversary in 1885,

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the bank moved to larger quarters at 545 Delaware. In spite of tumultuous times, including the Panic of 1893, followed by the purchase of two major local financial institutions, Wood's National Bank of Commerce grew to become the largest bank west of Chicago, with deposits of \$36 million in 1900.

After moving from temporary quarters in Room 104 of the New York Life Building, the fifth location of the National Bank of Commerce came in 1898 when the bank purchased and remodeled the former Journal building at the northwest corner of 10th and Walnut streets. At that time the Journal Building became known as the Commerce Building.

Commerce Trust Company

The continued success of the National Bank of Commerce, coupled with the growing population of Kansas City, inspired Woods to launch a new financial institution. In 1906, Woods organized the Commerce Trust Company and appointed William Thornton Kemper, Sr. as its first president. Kemper, who at the age of thirty-three was the youngest person to be elected president of the Board of Trade in Kansas City, had experience as a bank employee in Valley Falls, Kansas. Although Commerce Trust Company opened its doors in a small room of a separate building at 919 Walnut Street, on October 1, 1906, it was soon to move to its new headquarters, along with the National Bank of Commerce.

At the same time that Woods announced the establishment of his new bank, he was also planning to construct a new building where both institutions could conduct their business. When the new fifteen-story building was completed in 1908, both the National Bank of Commerce and Commerce Trust Company moved to their operations to the 10th and Walnut location. The National Bank occupied the Walnut Street lobby, while the Commerce Trust Company, which specialized in personal accounts, occupied the 10th Street Lobby.

After a brief disruption of executive operations and unprecedented withdrawals, due to the 1907 bank panic, Dr. Woods retired, leaving the presidency of the National Bank of Commerce to J. Wilson Perry. Concurrently, the Union National Bank was purchased. In 1912, the Southwest National Bank was consolidated with the National Bank of Commerce and the name changed to Southwest National Bank of Commerce. Deposits of the combined banks totaled \$32,000,000. Then in 1917, National Bank of Commerce purchased Commerce Trust Company, yet the two businesses continued as separate concerns. At the annual election of January 14, 1919, the word "Southwest" was dropped from the corporate title and the name reverted to the original National Bank of Commerce. Deposits that year reached \$60,000,000.

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The Commerce Trust Company continued to operate separately until March 15, 1921, when it merged with the National Bank of Commerce. The name changed to Commerce Trust Company with total capital of \$6,000,000 and deposits of \$80,000,000. The physical merger of the two banks gave Kansas City increased prestige. After the consolidation, the quarters of the 10th and Walnut Street building constituted the main commercial banking floor. The 10th Street portion housed the trust, savings, bond and mortgage departments and the location of the safe deposit boxes. The continued success of the bank at that time can be attributed to Kemper's innovative customer services, including the Women's Department, which "helped women become more familiar with banking and lessened their traditional dependence on males for financial advice." (Commerce Bank, 9).

The tradition of personalized banking continued under the direction of James Kemper, W. T. Kemper's son, who was elected president of Commerce Trust Company in 1925. Other innovative services included a 24-hour transit department, the first in the nation. The new Commerce system, "quickly acclaimed by other banks around the nation," made it possible for checks to reach the paying bank one to three days sooner than previously possible. (Commerce, 10). During the 1920s, Commerce also established smaller banks in neighboring communities.

W. T. Kemper, who had sold his interest at \$220 a share in 1922, returned to Commerce when he reacquired the bank stock at \$86 a share in 1933. Kemper's reappearance secured the bank's popularity with the community, even in the most difficult times during national bank runs. "To fortify the confidence and health of his customers, William Kemper personally distributed apples to the hundreds who were waiting in line" on the eve of President Roosevelt's Bank Holiday to withdraw their accounts. (Schirmer and McKenzie, 287). Kemper's exploit was effective. Commerce endured the bank run and by December 1933 increased its deposits from \$59 million to \$90 million. It held its place as Kansas City's largest bank.

Beginning in the 1940s, Commerce Trust Company actively participated in the redevelopment of Kansas City's decaying downtown. As chairman of the Downtown Committee, James Kemper combated the situation by organizing the redevelopment of the downtown core. Commerce Trust Company itself invested in the business district by completing a massive remodeling program in the 10th and Walnut Building and also by constructing the Commerce Tower Office Building in 1965. Rising 30 stories and totaling 500,000 square feet, Commerce Tower was touted as the tallest commercial building in Missouri. For Commerce Trust Company, this project marked the beginning of a "permanent

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revitalization of downtown." (Commerce Bank, 17).

Under the direction of James Kemper, Jr., elected president in 1955 at the age of thirty-four, Commerce Trust Company changed the course of banking for the entire state of Missouri. In 1966, Commerce organized Commerce Bancshares, Inc., a holding company that had the ability of acquiring Missouri banks as affiliates. Previously branch banking was illegal in the state; subsequently this change allowed Commerce to obtain forty banks with total assets over \$3.1 billion by the early 1980s.

Today, Commerce Bank, N.A. Kansas City, is ranked as the largest bank in Missouri, with \$8,468,639,000 in assets. Jonathan M. Kemper, the great, great grandson of W.S. Woods, is the chairman and CEO; Jay Reardon is the president. Historians attribute the success of Commerce to W.T. Kemper who "proceeded to establish the greatest banking dynasty in the history of Missouri." (Hubbard and Davids, 150).

The Building Campaign and Design of the National Bank of Commerce

In an article that appeared in the April 24, 1906 edition of *The Kansas City Star*, it was announced that Jarvis Hunt "will probably be given the contract for the construction of the fourteen-story steel office building" for the National Bank of Commerce. Hunt's proposed building, illustrated in the *Star* article, lacked the ornate terminus of the final, implemented design. Although it is not known if other architects were considered for the project, it appears that Hunt was awarded the contract by the summer of 1906.

Work on the foundation for the Beaux-Arts inspired, three-part vertical block skyscraper began in November 1906 at the northwest corner of 10th and Walnut streets, the former location of the Commerce (originally called the Journal) Building. The foundation for the bank was completed in January 1907. The building's use of structural steel was one of "the first examples in Kansas City of skyscraper-type construction conceived for buildings of more than ten or twelve stories." (Ehrlich, 61).

Hunt's final drawing for the National Bank of Commerce appeared in *The Kansas City Star*, April 7, 1907, while revisions to the interior were made as late as October of that year. In its final form, the building's overall proportions, massing and ornamentation were somewhat modified from the original concept and a fifteenth story was added. While Hunt's 1906 plan for the tripartite entry arcade at the main or east facade was further embellished with flanking coupled columns and crowned by a prominent projecting cornice,

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the 1907 scheme eliminated the columns and consequently surrounded the entrance with rusticated stonework. The cornice and balustrade, too, were made less conspicuous. Hunt also gave the building a more graceful, soaring character by emphasizing its verticality with the use of multiple piers between the fenestration in the shaft portion. The upper zone, which features the two-story continuous arcade, imparts a visual strength that was absent in Hunt's initial design. Additionally, the differentiated end bays enhanced by rusticated masonry, further connotes order and stability...hallmarks of the National Bank of Commerce. The wide, first-story windows and contrasting granite base visually anchor the building. At the same time Hunt was preparing final revisions to the design, work on the site continued.

While construction on the building progressed, following the demolition of the Commerce Building, the National Bank of Commerce moved, again, to temporary quarters at 1016-18 Walnut Street. Commerce Trust Company was relocated to 925 Walnut Street. In 1908, the National Bank of Commerce and Commerce Trust Company moved into their new location.

Historically, Hunt's design for the National Bank of Commerce, with its centered light well, can be traced as far back as 1531. It was that year that the Antwerp Exchange was built, "for the use of traders of all nations and all languages." (Pevsner, 195). The exchange was an open space enclosed by one-story, elaborately detailed cloisters, essentially a light well without a roof. The Amsterdam Exchange (1608-11) and the Royal Exchange in London (1667-71), followed that of the open courtyard and cloister, the later incorporating a triumphal arch at the entrance, flanked by tripartite arcades. The motifs and effects of these exchanges more than hint at their counterparts constructed nearly three centuries later.

Hunt, however, was ultimately influenced by his environment while practicing architecture in Chicago. Although the first designation of the "elevator" or tall building had its inception in New York (i.e., Richard Morris Hunt's Tribune Building from 1873-75), the early history of the skyscraper, with the analogous base-shaft-capital, truly evolved in Chicago. After the disastrous fire of 1871, Chicago's architects had an "unprecedented opportunity to build from scratch, and for the next two decades a building boom created the developed form of the skyscraper and the so-called Chicago Style." (Brown, et. al., 256).

Pioneer architects Louis Sullivan (1856-1924), who studied at M.I.T. and the École des Beaux-Arts, and William LeBaron Jenney (1832-1924), both responsible for technological and aesthetic advances in architecture, had

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major works constructed prior to Hunt's arrival in Chicago. Hunt, too, was unquestionably inspired by the work of Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912), one of the most eminent architects of his time. Burnham, along with his partner John Wellborn Root, designed the highly innovative Rookery Building (1885-1887), one of the greatest achievements in skyscraper design. "It's logical plan, attributed to Burnham, with four connecting wings surrounding a light court, would serve as a model for skyscraper layout." (Maddex, 102). The need for a maximum amount of natural light (and air), when the development of safe, artificial light was still in its infancy, was paramount. Aside from the obvious connection to the Rookery, one can see a striking similarity between Hunt's National Bank of Commerce and Burnham's seventeen-story First National Bank, constructed in 1907 and characterized by its arcaded base and capital, lofty mezzanine and interior court.

It is important to note that one of Hunt's own designs may have been the actual model for his National Bank of Commerce building. The American Trust & Savings Bank Building (1907, Chicago; demolished), exhibited the same massing, proportions and detailing as the Kansas City bank building. The tripartite arched entry, sweeping central stairway and grand lobby with mezzanine, are details that were duplicated in both facilities. More than likely, the Beaux-Arts American Trust & Savings Bank Building was formed around a light well, but because the building is no longer extant and records regarding the building have not been located, this fact has not been confirmed.

Jarvis Hunt

Nephew of celebrated New York architect Richard Morris Hunt (see above) and muralist William Morris Hunt, Jarvis Hunt (1859-1941) was born in Wethersfield, Vermont. Hunt came to Chicago in 1893, following coursework at Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to supervise construction of the Vermont State Building at the World's Columbian Exposition. Trained in the tradition of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (the influential French architectural school whose antecedents could be traced to Colbert's founding of the Royal Academy of Architecture in 1671), Hunt designed a variety of building types, from luxury residences to commercial buildings, train stations and warehouses. In many of his commercial works, he employed the use of the triple-arched motif, a reflection of Beaux-Arts design principles that predominated architecture in the United States from ca. 1886 to 1936. The triple-arch vocabulary can be seen, for example, in the main facade of the National Bank of Commerce Building, Kansas City, Missouri, the subject of this nomination.

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In Chicago, Hunt's more significant works include the Saddle and Cycle Club (1905), at Foster and Lake Shore Drive; The Lake Shore Athletic Club (1924, now part of Northwestern University); and the original buildings at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in North Chicago (1906-11). Hunt also designed the Michigan Boulevard Building (1913-14; 1923), at 30 N. Michigan Avenue, 900 North Michigan Avenue Building (1926, demolished 1984) and in 1922, submitted a concept drawing for the Chicago Tribune competition. The American Trust and Savings Bank Building (1907, demolished) at Monroe and Clark streets, can certainly be considered the prototype to the National Bank and Trust Building completed a year later (see above).

Outside of Chicago, Hunt designed several prominent railroad stations. These include the Kansas City Union Station (completed 1914) and railroad terminals in Oakland California; Joliet, Illinois; and Dallas, Texas, all completed in 1912. Each of these stations share similar massing and form. Hunt's hallmark triple arch can be seen in the main facade's of each building except the Dallas facility. Other notable works of Hunt include the Newark Museum and Bambergers Department Store, both located in Newark, New Jersey. The Kansas City Star Building (1911), modeled after the McLean Residence in Washington, D.C., should also be mentioned as one of Hunt's more outstanding works.

Hunt maintained his office in Chicago where he carried out a successful architectural practice for nearly thirty-five years. According to the "Kansas City Union Station Historic Structures Report", Hunt employed two key architect's while in business. Charles Bohasseck, who played a significant role in the design of Kansas City's Union Station, was later promoted to partnership. The firm became known as Hunt and Bohasseck. A.H. Buckley was superintendent for the architect and Hunt's full-time, on-site representative during the terminal's construction from 1910-1915.

In 1927, Hunt retired to St. Petersburg, Florida. He died at his home in St. Petersburg on June 16, 1941. Sources indicate that he had a daughter, Diana Hunt Edgerton (born October 22, 1932) and a son, Jarvis Hunt, Jr. Hunt's personal papers have not been located, if indeed they have survived.

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Verbal Boundary Description

All of LOTS 20, 21 and 22, SWOPE'S ADDITION, a subdivision in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, EXCEPT that part in Street, ALSO 7 4/5 inches off of the South side of Lot 10, in BLOCK 2, RIDGE'S PLACE, a subdivision in Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri, ALSO 1 1/5 inches lying immediately South of and adjoining Lot 10 of the last mentioned subdivision.

Boundary Justification

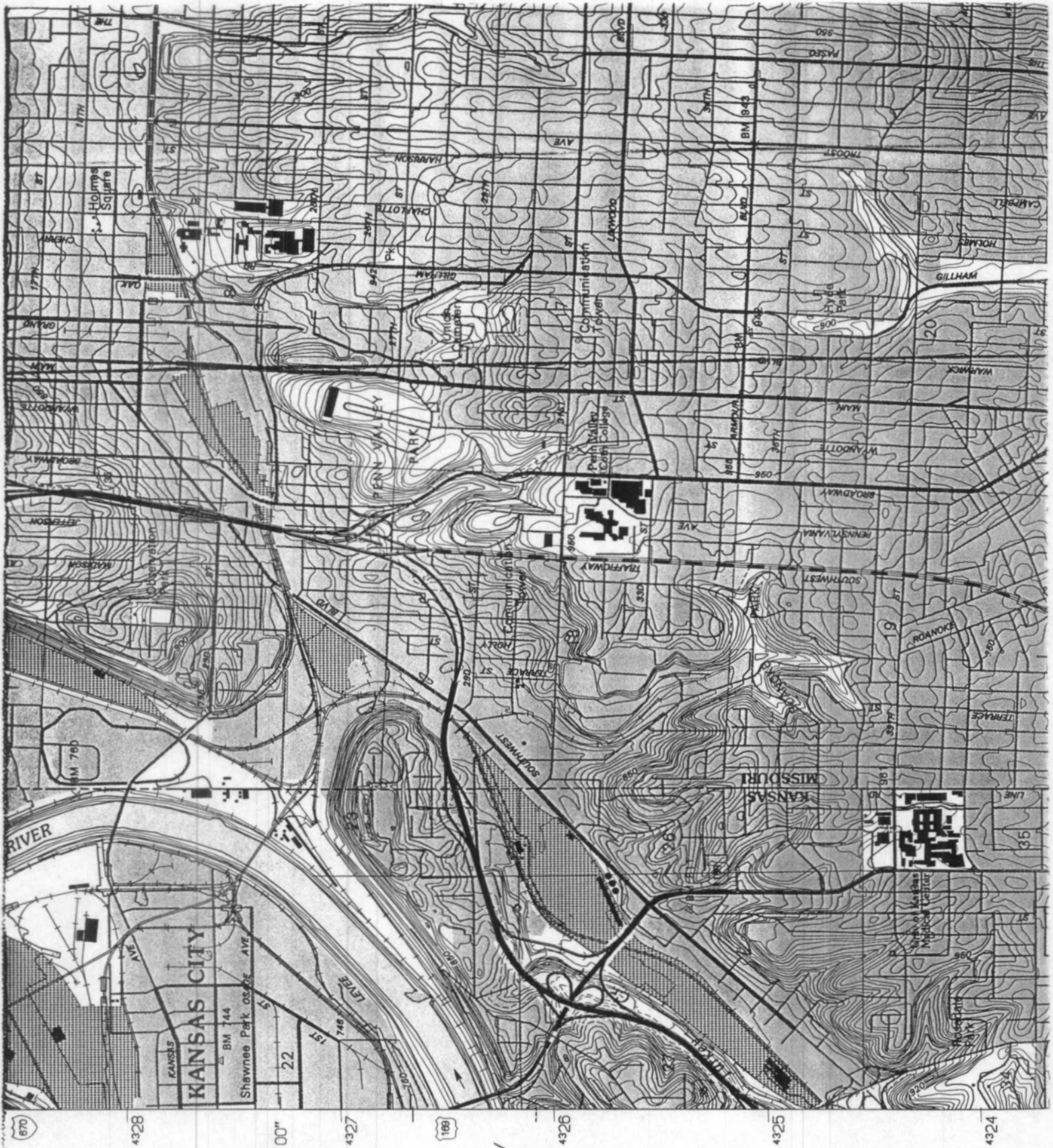
The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the National Bank of Commerce Building.

Photographs

The following information is the same for all photographs:

National Bank of Commerce Building
Jackson County, MO
John W. Gutowski
November 1998
Architectural and Historical Research, P.O. Box 22551, Kansas City, MO
64113-0551

1. east and south facades, view facing northwest
2. west and south facades, view facing northeast
3. north and east facades, view facing south/southwest
4. detail of main entrance, east facade, view facing west
5. detail of entrance, far north bay, east facade, view facing north/northwest
6. detail of Tenth Street entrance, south facade, view facing north/northwest
7. detail of clock, southeast facade, view facing northwest
8. elevator lobby, first floor, view facing east
9. President's Room, first floor, view facing southeast
10. President's Room, first floor, view facing southwest
11. James Kemper's Office, second floor
12. 1908 vault, Tenth Street entrance, view facing northwest



THE NEW OFFICE
BANK OF
COMMERCIAL
BUILDING,
JACKSON
COUNTY

MO

15/363220/

4329330

4328

5' 00"

4327

108

4326

4325

4324

National Bank of Commerce Bldg
922-924 Walnut St.
Kansas City, MO

No. 1

John W. Gutowski, photographer
November 1948















